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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Interview with Mike O'Neil, 14 December 1984

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1 Mike O'Neil spent the day here reviewing our files on rightwing terrorism. He seemed at loose ends for lunch so I invited him to join me in the cafeteria. He did, and highlights of our chat follow: [redacted] joined us for the latter third of our lunch.)

2. HPSCI Transcripts--can we get them? O'Neil said that if he could guess Mr. Hamilton's reaction to that, it would be consistent with the several letters from the Committee refusing us permanent custody. The reason for this, he said, is that HPSCI transcripts passed on a permanent basis to CIA would be subject to FOIA. He said that in order to qualify for exemption from FOIA, any document passed from HPSCI to the Agency must show that the Committee retains permanent custody of the document and is providing the Agency with said document for only a specific and limited time. However, as in the past, the Committee would be pleased to make transcripts available to us to peruse and return. I asked if perhaps there were not some other legal way around this one and he felt not.

3 In response to the ADDO's request that we try to get back the sensitive annexes to our Congressional Budget submissions covering covert action activities during the Fiscal Years 1977 to date, O'Neil said that the Committee wanted more detail. He said that Hamilton, who has already made it known that he will require considerably more replies from CIA in writing, would almost certainly not return the annexes. I insisted that he try to get the annexes back for us and he said that he would try. I told him that this is something that isn't going to go away in that we aren't going to be comfortable about these most sensitive details being kept out of house. I'll check with Danny to see if any ideas come to him on springing our annexes.

4 O'Neil reiterated the problem he perceives in both the time lag in our replies to the Committee, but also in the quality of the answers we provide. He was most critical of the inconsistency in our replies, but it became clear that he was referring mostly to testimony given by the previous C/LAD and the Director. Mike, I think, most clearly manifests the cynicism and downright incredulity on the Hill where some of our leadership is concerned. He did preface most of his

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observations with "some believe that ..." but made the point that there is considerable sentiment on the side of those who believe we lie to Congress all the time. I came away with the feeling that his view of us is really rather jaundiced, maybe irremediably so.

5 The rest of our chat was generally devoted to philosophic questions of the "Peter Principle" motivating promotions at CIA; the need for SIS headroom for area specialists both on the DDI side as analysts and case officers on the DDO side.

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Chief, Liaison Division
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P.S. Afternoon of 17 December, Mike O'Neil called to report that HPSCI is "disinclined" to return our annexes, want more of the same and in greater detail in the future.

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